



Niantic River Watershed Advisory Committee

Subcommittee Meeting -
Education & Outreach and
Monitoring Subcommittees
August 10, 2010
4:00 - 6:00 pm
Lower Meeting Room, Waterford Town Hall

Attendees: Kim Barber-Bradley, GEI Consultants; Marcia Benvenuti, Waterford; Dick Conway, Waterford; Don Danila, Millstone Env. Lab; Fred Grimsey, Save-the-River, Save-the-Hills, Inc.; John Jasper, East Lyme; Dave Lersch, Waterford; Steve Loomis, CT College; Joe Mingo, East Lyme; John Mullaney, USGS; Eric Thomas, CT DEP; David Turner, Montville; Tom Wagner, Town of Waterford; Judy Rondeau, Watershed Coordinator

1. Welcome - Judy Rondeau opened the meeting at 4:06 pm, and welcomed participants.
2. Introductions – Introductions were made around the table.
3. Review of July 13, 2010 Meeting Minutes - Judy summarized the minutes for committee members. Joe Mingo made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Dave Lersch. All in favor, motion carries. Marcia Benvenuti abstained as she was not present at the July meeting.
4. Superintendent Questionnaire Follow-up –
 - a. Loan Kits - Dave Turner reported that he had reviewed the cost of materials for the water quality loan kits. Depending on the level of sophistication of the equipment, the cost to assemble the loans kits ranges from \$4800 to \$6000. He stated concern for the some of the proposed instrumentation, which is extremely sensitive and needs to be handled carefully. He also stated concerns about the usefulness of the data gathered. Marcia Benvenuti stated that the CMT targets 5th and 6th graders for water quality curriculum, that the kits need to be simple to target the needs of the teachers, and that sophisticated tests and equipment would not be suitable for their purposes. Discussion followed regarding ways to reduce the cost and technical sophistication of the kits. Dave stated it might be possible to create two sets of kits, one simple kit for students to learn basic water quality concepts, and one more sophisticated kit for water quality monitoring volunteers to get usable, credible data. Grant opportunities could be sought to target both options. Marcia reiterated that the science curriculum is already in place and we need to work with it. Simple equipment such as Hach test kits would be appropriate. It might also help to have a NRWAG member go with the kit and instruct the students in its use, concepts, etc. The more sophisticated test kit would be better for long-term projects, after-school groups, or volunteer water quality monitoring groups. Discussion followed

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regarding use of other equipment such as secchi disks, the possibility of creating instructional videos, partnering with Project O to conduct monitoring in Niantic River, and question of whether contamination and bacterial pollution were addresses in science framework. Marcia stated the Connecticut science curriculum is available on-line for review.

- b. Monitoring Partnering – Dave Turner stated that we need to think about getting data to fill in gaps in existing data, and to target specific known problems like the decline in the eelgrass beds. He added that much existing data is not organized or necessarily easily available. Fred Grimsey stated that he has been looking for professional advice to refine his monitoring program. Steve Loomis stated that the EPA has a guidance booklet available for monitoring estuaries and he would forward the link to Fred.

5. Outreach –

- a. Buffer-in-a-Bag Concept – Judy distributed a handout detailing potential costs for the buffer kits, based on material costs listed in the Maryland Forest Service presentation, and tree costs she researched on the internet. The purpose was to determine if the project would be feasible. She also stated that there were two basic options for distribution. The first was to obtain a grant to cover costs and to essentially give away the kits to homeowners, based on an application, review and selection process. With this option, there would need to be some sort of monitoring or review component to ensure the buffer plantings were having the desired result. The second option would be to take orders and sell the kits outright. John Jasper asked if ground covers had been considered, but Judy only looked at riparian-appropriate shrubs and trees. John Mullaney suggested we also consider upland wetland areas as important recharge resources to protect. Eric Thomas stated the Rivers Alliance grant round was upcoming and he would check on the date.
- b. LID Program - Judy stated she was continuing to arrange the LID program for September, and was still trying to locate an available site. Several sites in Waterford and East Lyme were suggested. Judy will follow up on those.
- c. Clean Marina Program – One of the specific recommendations of the NRWPP is to promote marina participation in the CRT DEP Clean Marinas Program. Judy spoke with Rick Huntley of the CT DEEP about the program. Rick suggested the best time to conduct the program was in February/March. Judy will continue to develop this program, and would like assistance from any committee members who have contacts within the marina community. Fred Grimsey stated the program is very difficult to comply with and needs to be revised.

6. Monitoring Data –

- a. RFP- Chris Tomichek was not able to join us today so there was no update on the RFP.
- b. Status of Data at Waterford Library application – Judy contacted the Waterford Library and apparently no data has ever been brought to the library for storage. Judy urged members to start submitting data. She will inventory it as it comes in. Dave Turner stated

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he has Montville MS-4 data. Other data is floating around, but some is not in digital format and would need to be scanned. Kim Barber-Bradley stated there is a list of data, and someone (Katherine Burton?) has compiled some data also. John Mullaney suggested Kleinschmidt Associates be contacted regarding the data they compiled during the NRWPP process.

7. Grant Updates – Fred Grimsey stated he expects to hear from NFWF regarding the grant application submitted earlier this year in the fall. John Mullaney updated the group on the status of the §319 grants he is working on. He has received additional funding for the three gaging stations on Oil Mill , Latimer and Stony Brooks.
8. Partner Reports – John Mullaney updated the group on the preliminary analysis of the data from the three stream gage sites. The USGS is also conducting groundwater monitoring at Pine Grove in East Lyme. Don Danila stated that Millstone is in the process of renewing their permit, a condition of which is to continue to conduct monitoring in the Niantic River. He also mentioned that Dominion Foundation may be a potential funding source for some of our smaller projects. Kim Barber-Bradley updated the group on the 2011 Envirothon. The current topic will be estuaries. Anyone from the Advisory Group who would like to volunteer is welcome. Dave Turner suggested we request a few volunteers from the monitoring group to target our monitoring goals and identify where we should focus monitoring efforts.
9. Next Meeting – September 14th, 2010, 3:00PM, LTA Room, Waterford Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 5:56 PM.

Action Items:

- Please submit monitoring data to Judy for inventorying and inclusion in the Waterford library data collection.